60p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

90

Jinxes
Biorhythms-the inside story
Crazy night with UFOs
Solid proof for survival?
The city under the sea

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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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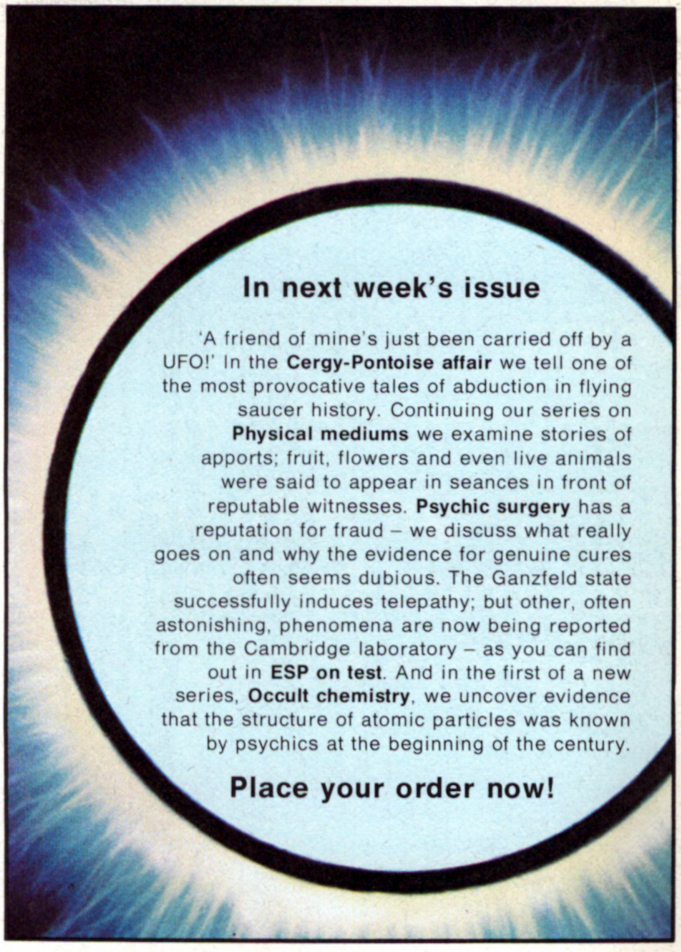

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Survival–the solid evidence?

Perhaps the most controversial area of psychical research is that of physical mediumship. ROY STEMMAN begins his assessment of the reports of some classic seances – both fraudulent and apparently genuinely paranormal

ONE OF THE IRONIES of the paranormal is that often the best evidence offered for the existence of a spiritual realm is produced in a physical form. It may seem absurd that raps, moving tables and levitating trumpets are manifestations produced by spirits, but explaining such phenomena in other ways is, perhaps, no more persuasive.

Such physical phenomena do not occur in isolation: a human catalyst seems to be responsible. The birth of Spiritualism in Hydesville, in the United States, in 1848, came about through simple raps that apparently formed the basis of communication between a dead pedlar and the Fox family (see page 1394). Within a few years, the three Fox sisters – Kate, Margaretta and Leah – were world-famous as mediums, and many others discovered that, under the right conditions, they too could produce physical phenomena.

Author and debunker William Marriott is surrounded by a fake medium's 'materialisation' props. In normal lighting – and without benefit of the heightened atmosphere of the seance room – these sheeted masks look laughably crude. Yet these very fabrications fooled a great many sitters

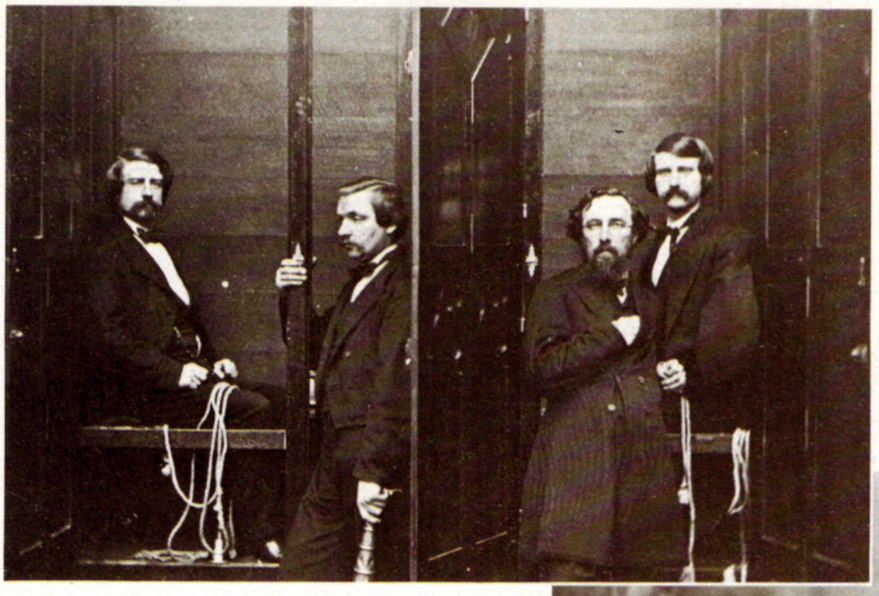
A cabin for spirits

In another American state during the early 1850s, farmer Jonathan Koons was conducting his own experiments with physical mediumship. He claimed that the spirits had told him he was 'the most powerful medium on earth' and, following their instructions, he built a small log cabin alongside his farmhouse in Ohio, so that he and his eight children – all of whom were said to be psychic – could hold seances. It was equipped with musical instruments and other items with which the spirits could play. In appearance it was like a tiny theatre, with seats for up to 30. When the audience was settled, Koons would turn the lights out and play hymns on his fiddle until unseen hands would lift the other musical instruments in the room and join in. During the noisy concert a tambourine circled above the heads of the audience, trumpets floated in the air and voices spoke. Spirit hands held phosphor-coated paper to illuminate some of the manifestations. Koons even built a 'spirit machine' – a complex piece of zinc and copper apparatus that the spirits said would help collect and focus the magnetic aura they used for their physical demonstrations. According to Koons, when this device was used the spirits could triumph over the laws of gravity and cohesion, enabling them to move heavy objects at speed and play instruments.

Just 3 miles (5 kilometres) away, and without the help of a 'spirit machine', John Tipple and his children were giving very similar performances in his spirit house, which was also said to have been built under instructions from the next world.

The Koonses' mediumship was comparatively short-lived. Jonathan Koons never charged for the seances he held and there is no evidence of fraud. But, despite Spiritualism's general popularity at that time, he encountered open hostility, particularly from his neighbours. His home was attacked by mobs, his children were beaten, and his barns and fields were set alight, forcing him to leave the area. He and his family eventually became Spiritualist missionaries.

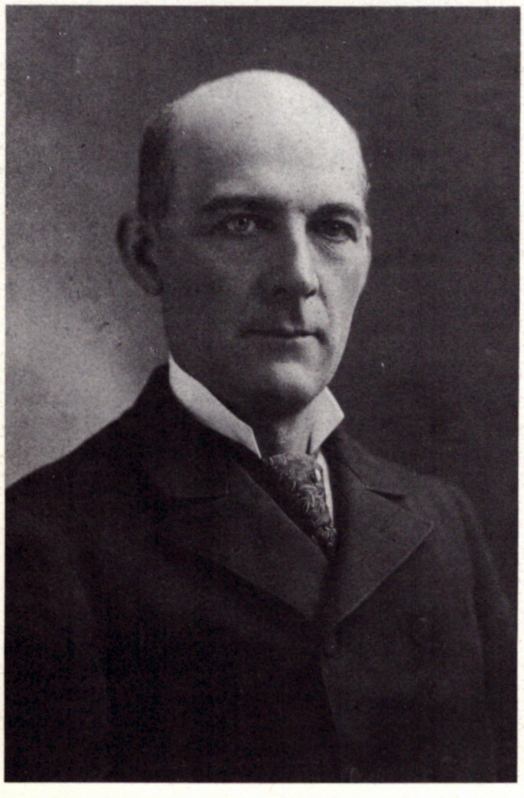
Another American family with a similar,



eventful seance room were the Davenports. Physical phenomena in the form of raps and strange noises were said to have been heard in their Buffalo, New York, home in 1846 – two years before the Hydesville episode. At that time, Ira Davenport was seven years old and his brother William was five. Four years later, the two boys and their sister Elisabeth began table turning with impressive results. The table moved, raps were heard and a spirit was said to have controlled Ira's hand and written messages. The three children are reported to have levitated simultaneously at least once. On the fifth night of their experiments Ira was told by the raps to take a pistol and shoot at a corner of the room. He did so, and at the moment it fired they saw another, phantom, figure holding the pistol. It vanished and the gun fell to the floor.

According to the Davenport children, they were told by the spirits to allow investigators to tie them up in ropes to prove that they were not producing the noises and other manifestations that occurred in their darkened room. This they did to the satisfaction of many visitors, including sceptics.

The Davenports' mediumship was no more remarkable than that of other physical mediums in the mid to late 1800s, but what set them apart was their decision to demonstrate their powers in public. To do this, the Davenport brothers constructed a three-door cabinet that was, in effect, a portable seance room. Members of the audience were invited to tie them up securely. But as soon as the doors were closed strange phenomena occurred. Raps and bangs were heard; hands waved through a small window in the cabinet's centre door and musical instruments were played. A member of the audience was often invited to sit inside the darkened cabinet while these manifestations were produced – yet at the end of the demonstration the brothers were still found to be securely tied.



The Davenport brothers were two of the most famous mediums of the late 19th century, exciting both extreme adulation and bitter hostility. Their stage show featured what was in effect a portable seance room – a three-doored cabinet (top, from left to right: Ira Davenport, a psychical researcher, the author Robert Cooper, who was impressed by the brothers' powers, and William Davenport). When Harry Houdini met Ira Davenport in the early 1900s (above) he claimed that Davenport confessed that he and his brother had never been anything but conjurers and that they had taught the famous magician Harry Kellar (left) many of his tricks

It was an impressive and entertaining display and large audiences flocked to the best theatres in town when the Davenport brothers took their 'public cabinet seance' on tour in America. But it created the same sort of controversy between believers and sceptics as Uri Geller did in the early 1970s. Certainly any competent escapologist could get in and out of tied ropes in the way the Davenports did, but that does not necessarily make them frauds. They never claimed to be Spiritualists, but they did maintain that their powers were paranormal – which was why, when the *Boston Courier* offered a $500 prize for the production of genuine physical phenomena, the Davenports applied.

Left: Ethel Beenham, secretary to psychical researcher Harry Price, demonstrates the relative ease with which a large piece of cheesecloth can be held in the mouth – a common method of producing fake 'ectoplasm'

Below: the Polish medium Stanislawa Tomczyk levitates a table simply by lifting up her hands. Extensively investigated by the eminent European psychical researcher Dr Julien Ochorowicz, she was discovered to have extremely impressive psychokinetic powers – although some sceptics have suggested that the objects she moved, apparently through PK, were in fact attached to her hands by fine string. There seems to be no grounds for this allegation, however, wires and strings being the first things any competent investigator looks for. Since Tomczyk's day, the phenomenon of psychokinesis has been demonstrated many times, but increasingly by non-Spiritualists

A committee of professors from Harvard University tested them on behalf of the newspaper. Ira and William were tied up, and the ropes passed through holes bored in the cabinet and knotted on the outside. One of the committee members, Professor Benjamin Pierce, then climbed into the cabinet and the doors were closed.

Just what happened next is a little uncertain. We know that the *Boston Courier* denied one version of the event, which was written by T.L. Nichols, the Davenports' biographer – this was, apparently, fairly favourable. But Professor Pierce would neither confirm nor deny it. What is certain is that when the cabinet doors were opened the brothers were found untied and the professor had the rope twisted around his neck. But even so, the newspaper did not award its $500 prize to the Davenports.

The controversy over the boys from Buffalo came to a head when they took their show on the road in Europe, where they encountered hostile audiences. Their reception in London and other English cities was particularly stormy and things turned ugly in Liverpool where two members of the inspection committee selected by the audience secured Ira and William with a complicated knot. The brothers claimed that it was restricting their circulation – but a doctor who examined them disagreed. The problem was resolved by a helper who used a knife to cut the knot. A riot broke out on the following night and the Davenports left Liverpool in haste. Elsewhere in Britain they received threats that made them decide to end their tour prematurely. As they wrote at the time:

> Were we mere jugglers, we should meet with no violence, or we should find protection. Could we declare that these things done in our presence were deception of the senses, we should no doubt reap a plentiful harvest of money and applause. . . . But we are not jugglers, and truthfully declare that we are not, and we are mobbed from town to town, our property destroyed and our lives imperilled.

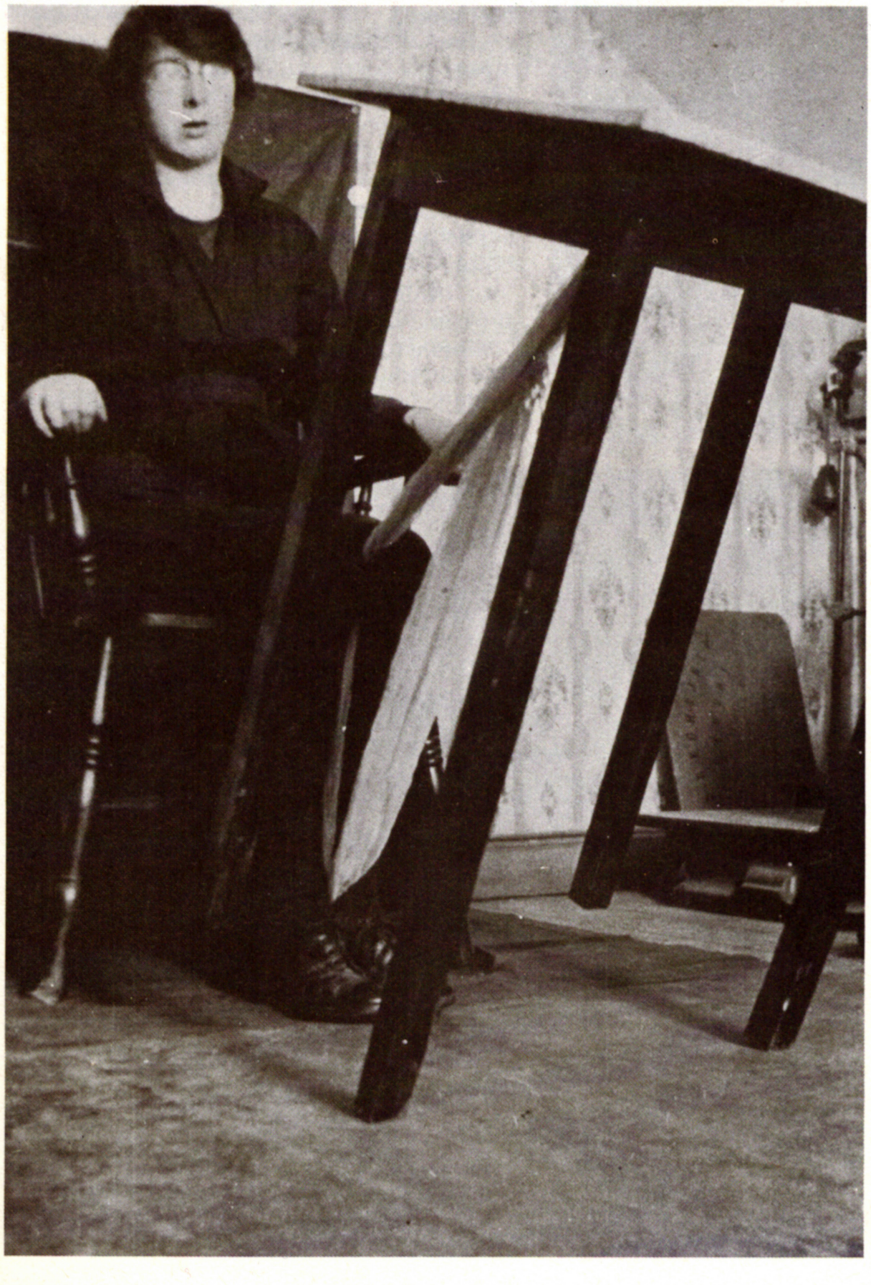
But Harry Houdini, the famous escapologist and illusionist, tells a different story. He befriended Ira in the early 1900s, and claimed that Ira admitted that they were no more than conjurers. There is no evidence to support that charge but it is a fact that Harry Kellar, who was also an internationally famous magician, was employed by the Davenports at one time and, in Houdini's words, 'afterwards learned to do tricks which altogether surpassed their efforts in rope-tying and escape.'

It is impossible to know now, over a century later, if the Davenports were genuine or fraudulent, and the theatricality that surrounded their 'seances' must have made it just as difficult for the eyewitnesses to decide. But experiments with physical

mediums under carefully controlled conditions have occasionally provided very strong evidence in favour of the genuineness of the manifestations they produce.

Sir William Crookes was one of the first physicists to explore the psychic force responsible for producing raps and movements. He tested the most famous of all physical mediums, Daniel Dunglas Home (see page 394) and became convinced that he possessed strong psychic powers.

Another early investigator of physical forces was Marc Thury, professor of physics and natural history at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, who witnessed the simultaneous levitation of two pianos in the presence of an 11-year-old boy, in the 1850s. Professor Thury suggested that the human body was able to exude a substance that was then manipulated by an unseen force to produce such startling effects. This was the forerunner of the ectoplasmic theory, and one that gained ground with many investigators whose observations appeared to provide a degree of confirmation.



Kate Goligher, an Irish medium of the 1920s, apparently levitates a table with the aid of ectoplasmic rods. These seem to be obviously fake, especially if seen in close-up (opposite, centre), yet Goligher was never proved to be fraudulent. Spiritualists believe that ectoplasm can exude from a medium and form any shape – fluid or rigid – and can thus account for any seance room phenomena from levitation of objects (or people) to full-form materialisations

What is puzzling in such cases as the levitating pianos is that, even if the boy had the opportunity to cheat, there is no way in which he could have lifted two such heavy items – or even one of them for that matter. Dr d'Oliveira Feijao, professor of surgery at Lisbon University in Portugal, made a similar observation with a non-professional medium, Countess Castelwitch, who discovered her powers in 1913. The doctor testified that at her seances

> blows were struck, the loudest being on the glass of the bookcase. Articles of furniture sometimes moved. Heavy chairs moved about the room . . . large and heavy books were flung on the floor (our hands being linked all the time).

Look – no hands

At one of the countess's seances a table weighing 160 pounds (73 kilograms) was raised on two legs when she touched it lightly. Another, smaller, table that was strengthened with sheet-iron was torn into 200 pieces by invisible hands that then piled the pieces into a corner of the seance room.

A few years earlier, Dr Julien Ochorowicz, an eminent European psychical researcher, carried out experiments with a young Polish girl, Stanislawa Tomczyk, who was reported to have the ability to move objects without touching them, stop the hands of a clock and even influence a roulette wheel when she chose the numbers. Dr Ochorowicz not only witnessed the levitation of small objects between Stanislawa Tomczyk's fingers, he also managed to capture the phenomenon on photographs. Sceptics, however, suggested that he had been fooled and that the medium was suspending the items with very thin thread. The researcher replied that during these demonstrations he had passed his hand between the object and the medium's fingers and the levitation was maintained. He put forward the theory that she was able to produce 'rigid rays' from her hands to cause these paranormal effects. Stanislawa Tomczyk never gave seances professionally. She confined her displays to scientific experiments and married Everard Feilding, one of the Society for Psychical Research's leading and most sceptical investigators.

Another physical medium who allowed her powers to be studied in the laboratory was Anna Rasmussen, a Danish woman who discovered her startling powers at the age of 12. A number of scientists conducted experiments with her in the 1920s, including Professor Christian Winther of the Polytechnic Academy of Copenhagen.

The professor held 116 seances with her in 1928, at each one of which some form of physical phenomenon was produced. The medium remained conscious throughout

Above left: dark, lace-like ectoplasm, said to have been produced at one of the Goligher seances in Belfast in the 1920s. Almost all such samples are said to have dematerialised, and only one specimen remains in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research – but it is indisputably cheesecloth

and usually sat talking, reading or taking refreshments and apparently unconcerned and detached from the manifestations that repeatedly occurred in her presence, including the production of raps, which apparently emanated from her left shoulder, that would answer questions. What impressed the scientists most, however, was the degree of control she could exert over the phenomena. In full daylight she was able to cause the movement of pendulums suspended in a sealed glass case at a distance from her. She was even able to move one pendulum at a time, leaving the others undisturbed, and make it move in whatever direction was requested.

A spectacular career

Nearly 30 years later, the same medium – then Anna Rasmussen Melloni – was asked by modern psychical researchers if she could repeat the demonstration for them. Several successful experiments were carried out in 1956 but because her own pendulums were used to produce the most impressive results this detracted from her achievement in the opinion of some experimenters.

While the early tests with Anna Rasmussen were being conducted in Denmark, a British medium was giving the last seances of her brief but spectacular (and strictly non-professional) career. Stella Cranshaw, a young nurse, was discovered by the colourful and controversial psychical researcher Harry Price in the early 1920s. She agreed to be tested at his National Laboratory of Psychical Research in London and he devised elaborate, ingenious equipment, including a fraud-proof seance table, to test her powers, as well as imposing stringent controls.

This table was really two: one inside another. The top of the inner table was fitted with a hinged trap door that could be opened only from the underside. Musical instruments, such as a harmonica or bell, were placed on a shelf between the legs of the inner table, and a length of gauze was wrapped around the legs. The sides of each table were also enclosed in wooden trellises. These precautions made it impossible for anyone to be able to touch the objects on the inner shelf.

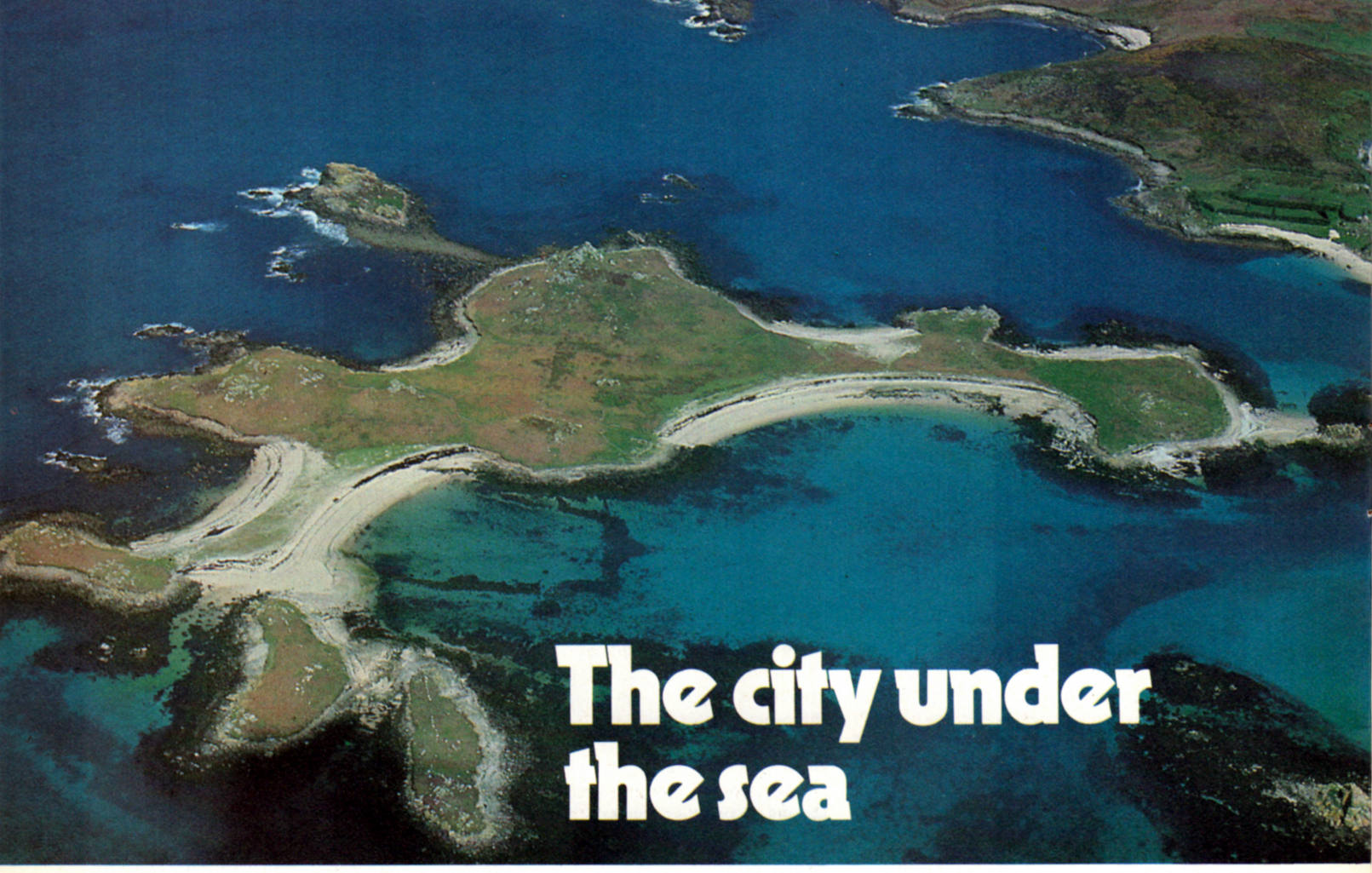
Stella Cranshaw sat at this table with other sitters, two of whom held her hands and feet throughout the proceedings. Soon after she went into a trance, sounds were heard coming from within the table, such as the ringing of a bell or the playing of a harmonica. The trap door in the table top was pushed up from inside and when a handkerchief was placed over it sitters felt finger-like forms moving beneath it.

The greatest achievement of Stella Cranshaw's mediumship in Harry Price's eyes was its successful manipulation of a telekinetiscope: a sensitive piece of apparatus that he had designed. It consisted of a small red light bulb, a battery and a telegraph key. When the key was pressed the light came on. To prevent this happening by normal means, Price designed it so that a soap bubble covered the key. The device was then placed inside a glass shade to prevent the soap bubble drying out. The light was turned on during a seance, apparently by psychokinesis, and when the device was inspected later the soap bubble was found to be still intact.

Below left: Stella Cranshaw, the young British nurse who was discovered to be a powerful medium by Harry Price in the 1920s. Despite her undoubted gifts, she was never really interested in mediumship and never gave public seances. When she married in 1928 she gave up this part of her life altogether

Stella Cranshaw was tested for a total of five years, but she had little interest or enthusiasm for psychic work. And when she married in 1928 she stopped giving seances altogether. Other physical mediums, however, continued to produce what seemed to be tangible evidence of their strange abilities.

In darkened rooms flowers, animals and even food appear . . . see page 1806



The city under the sea

The chronicles of western Cornwall refer again and again to a land called Lyonesse that stretched westwards from Land's End. What was its exact location, and how did it disappear? PAUL BEGG sifts the evidence

THE EARLIEST MENTION of Lyonesse is to be found in the *Itinery* of William Worcestre written in 1480. Between 1478 and 1480 William made several journeys through England, making numerous notes of what he saw, read and was told. His *Itinery* is therefore a valuable source of jottings on people, places, buildings, ecology and natural history – and on something that evidently particulary fascinated William, history and historical traditions. Of the vague Cornish traditions of a vision of St Michael the Archangel at St Michael's Mount, which Worcestre dates as having happened in the year 710, he writes:

> The apparition of St Michael at the Mountain tomb, formerly called the Hoar Rock in the Wood; and there were both woods and meadows and ploughland between the said mount and the Scilly Isles and 140 parish churches were drowned between that mount and Scilly. . . . The site of St Michael's Mount is . . . surrounded by the ocean; and the monks of the same place [asked] the Bishop of Avranches, named Aubert, to build a temple of St Michael; the aforesaid place was formerly clad in densest forest, six miles [10 kilometres] from the sea, and offered a most suitable retreat for wild beasts, where we find there were formerly monks serving God.

An aerial view of the Scilly Isles, showing clearly the shallowness of the sea between them. Could it be that the Scillies were once one large island – subsequently immortalised in legend as Lyonesse?

Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, in north-west France, is unknown beyond the legend that between 706 and 708 he three times fell asleep on the Rocher de la Tombe, a rocky island off the coast close to Avranches, and each time saw a vision of St Michael, who told him to build a church in that place. Bishop Aubert – who was later canonised – did so, and the church of Mont Saint Michel was the result. St Aubert was buried there about 725.

It has been argued that William Worcestre must have based his account on copies of manuscripts he saw in the abbey of Mont Saint Michel, confusing the legend of Lyonesse with stories current in Normandy about great inundations along the Atlantic coast of France; the best-known of these tells of the splendid city of Ys that was said once to have existed on the shores of what is now the Bay of Douarnenez. However, there are some important pieces of evidence to suggest that Worcestre's account may be accurate. A petrified forest has been found around the base of St Michael's Mount, so it seems feasible that the mount should once have been known, as Worcestre claims, as the Hoar Rock in the Wood. A site where axes were made, dating from around 1500 BC, has been discovered in Mount's Bay, which means that the area around the mount must

once have been above water, and Worcestre's report that the mount and the Scilly Isles were once joined by a tract of land may be correct.

Another important mention of Lyonesse comes in the *Description of Cornwall* published by the famous map-maker John Norden in 1584; and 18 years later, in his *Survey of Cornwall*, Richard Carew provides details that have since become a standard part of the legend:

> the encroaching sea hath ravined from it the whole country of Lyonesse, together with divers other parcels of no little circuit, and that such a Lyonesse there was these proofs are yet remaining. The space between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly, being about thirty miles [50 kilometres], to this day retaineth the name, in Cornish *Lethowsow*, and carrieth continually an equal depth of 40–60 fathom [60 to 100 metres] (a thing not unproper in the sea's proper dominion) save that about midway there lieth a rock which at low tide discovereth his head. They term it the Gulf, suiting thereby the other name of Scilla. Fishermen also casting their hooks thereabouts have drawn up pieces of doors and windows. Moreover, the ancient name of St Michael's Mount was Cara-clowse in Cowse, in English, the Hoar Rock in the Wood, which now is at every flood encompassed by the sea, and yet at some low ebbs, roots of mighty trees are described in the sands about it.

If the fishermen *did* bring up 'pieces of doors and windows' from around the region of the Seven Stones reef, such flotsam is likely to have come from one of the many wrecks in the area. However, the assertion is repeated 150 years later, in 1750, with a very interesting addition by Robert Heath in his *A natural and historical account of the islands of Scilly*:

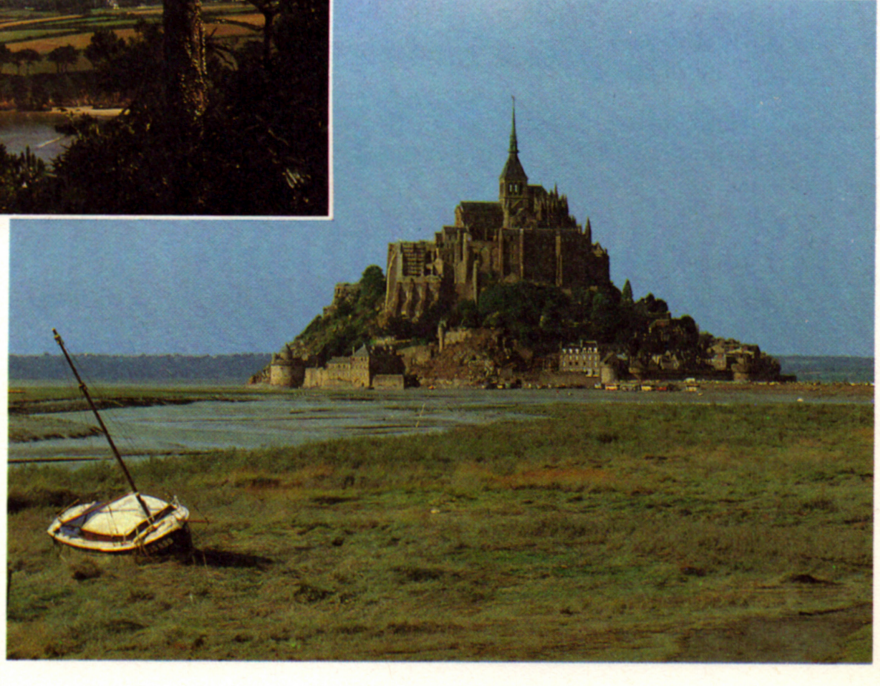
> At Sennen Church-Town, near the extremity of Cornwall, there is the base of an old stone column, belonging to a building, which was taken up by some fishermen about the place of the Seven Stones, about 18 inches [50 centimetres] height and three feet [1 metre] diameter at the circular base. Besides which, other pieces of building and glass windoes have been taken up at different times in the same place, with divers kind of utensils.

Some interesting ruins are mentioned by the Reverend William Borlase in an article with the title 'Of the great alterations which the islands of Scilly have undergone since the time of the ancients', published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1754:

> The flats which stretch from one island to another, are plain evidences of a former union subsisting between many now distinct islands. The flats between Trescaw, Brehar and Samson are quite dry at spring tide, and men easily pass dry-shod from one island to another, over sand banks (where, on the shifting of the sands, walls and ruins are frequently discovered) on which at full sea there are 10 and 12 feet [3 or 4 metres] of water.

Herbs and incantations

A quarter of a century after Borlase, in 1780, an old Cornishwoman is said to have poured a selection of herbs into the sea at Land's End and spoken an incantation that, she hoped, would result in Lyonesse rising from the waves. Nothing happened, of course – but in one sense, just over a century later, perhaps Lyonesse did begin to rise, from the realms of legend into the world of fact. In an article, 'Lyonesse', in the journal *Antiquity* in 1927, archaeologist O.G.S. Crawford wrote how, while walking at the spring tide across the



Below: the Bay of Douarnenez, close to Mont Saint Michel (bottom) in north-west France, possibly the site of the legendary city of Ys which, so the story goes, was swept away by floods. A 15th-century account by William Worcestre tells of a land that once stretched between St Michael's Mount in Cornwall and the Scilly Isles. Is this a reference to Lyonesse – or is Worcestre simply muddling St Michael's Mount with Mont Saint Michel and the stories of the disappearance of Ys with similar stories of Lyonesse?

sandflats between Samson and Tresco, he and a companion found a line of stones – probably the very stones mentioned by Borlase:

> We found that the line of stones was undoubtedly the remains of a wall of human construction. It consisted of boulders and stones about the size of a milestone, some of them still standing upright. All round on either side of the wall were scattered the smaller stones which once filled the spaces between the larger uprights. Elsewhere the sands were almost bare. The fact that some of these stones still remained standing proved conclusively that the thing was artificial.

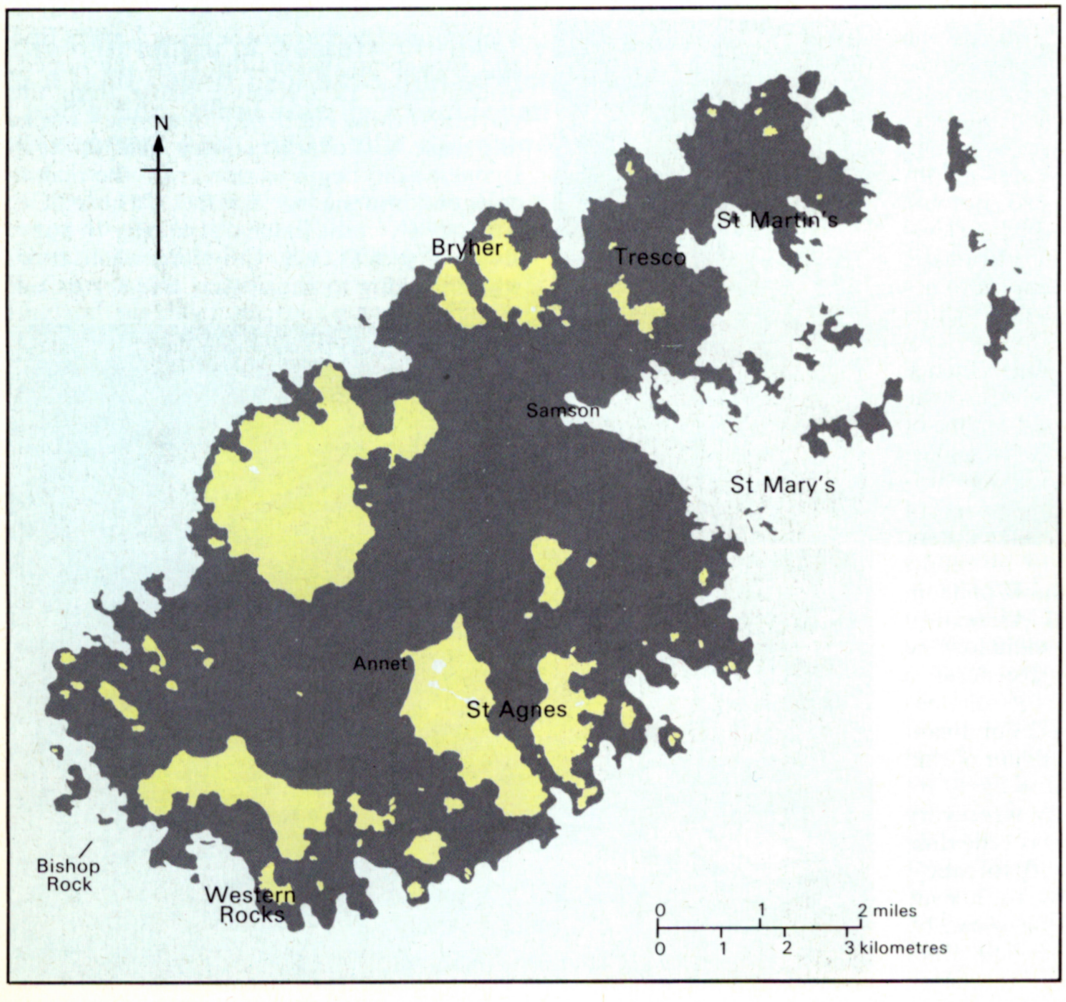
The line of boulders discovered by Crawford was the remnant of a stone dyke, and it must have been built at a time when the region now under water was dry land. It provides important evidence to support the view that the sea level has risen since the emergence of agricultural Man – and perhaps within recorded history.

In fact, hydrographers have now confirmed that the Isles of Scilly were once a single, large island. At the 65-foot (18-metre) line the present islands are revealed as the hills of an island some 7 miles (11 kilometres) long and 6 miles (10 kilometres) wide with a long, narrow peninsula pushing out for about

The story of Tristram

The story of Tristram of Lohnis – Lyonesse – and Isolde, or Yseult, is among the most tragic and moving episodes of the Arthurian cycle. Tristram, the orphaned son of the king of Lohnis, is adopted as a baby by King Mark. Years later, he is sent to Ireland to collect Mark's bride, Isolde 'the fair', daughter of the Irish king Gurman. On the journey back to Cornwall there is an accident with a love potion intended for the use of Mark and Isolde on their wedding night. Against their inclinations, and despite their obligations to Mark, Tristram and Isolde fall irresistibly in love and are eventually destroyed by the conflict of their passion for each other and their loyalties and obligations to Mark.

It is a tragic and beautiful story, but one question remains: does Tristram really have any connection with Lyonesse? Some authorities believe that the Tristram-Isolde story was based on a factual account of the life of Drust – an early form of the name Tristram – son of a Pictish king named Tallorc who ruled about 780. It is argued that Lohnis



Left: a map of the Scilly Isles. The green area represents the islands as they appear at high tide; the grey area is that which would be uncovered if the sea level were to sink by 65 feet (20 metres). Some experts have argued that the legend of Lyonesse originates from a time when the sea level was this low, and the Scilly Islands formed a single land mass

was not Lyonesse, but Drust's home – Lothian in Scotland.

However, a mile (1.6 kilometres) north-west of Fowey in Cornwall there stands a monolith bearing the inscription *Drustanus hic iacit filius Cunomori* ('Here lies Tristram, son of Cynvawr'). It is known that a sixth-century king of Cornwall was named Cynvawr, and it is reasonable to assume that the Tristram important enough to be commemorated by a monolith was his son. A ninth-century manuscript written by a monk of Llandevennec named Wrmonoc records that a sixth-century king of Brittany named Mark was also called Cynvawr. It is perfectly possible that this king of Brittany's rule extended to Cornwall and that he and the Cornish king are one and the same. Thus we have a real Tristram, who was probably the son – perhaps adopted – of a King Mark, and was a contemporary of Arthur.

Lyonesse, if it existed, was almost certainly submerged by Tristram's time, so it is unlikely to have been his home, but it remains possible that his family originally came from whatever part may have remained above water – that is, the Scilly Isles.

Further reading

Geoffrey Ashe (ed.), *The quest for Arthur's Britain*, Paladin 1971

Rhys Carpenter, *Beyond the pillars of Hercules*, Universal-Tandem 1973

Sally Jones, *Legends of Cornwall*, Bossiney Books 1980

3 miles (5 kilometres) westwards in the direction of Bishop Rock. This is how the Scilly Isles must have looked about 8000 BC, at the end of the last glacial period. Successive centuries saw the sea level rise. By 500 BC the Western Isles, Annet and Agnes – eight or nine islands altogether – had become separated from the main island. The sea level went on rising and there were a few dramatic inundations. Then, about AD 370, there occurred the final great submergence, which left the Scillies in their present form.

Among the most recently found evidence for this picture of the Scilly Isles are the remains of a settlement discovered on one of the smallest of the Eastern Isles, Nornour. The existence of this settlement was unknown before 1962, but the spring storms of that year revealed a wall, and subsequent excavation uncovered a number of rooms that had been continuously occupied from the late period of the megalith builders until approximately the fourth century AD. The Nornour site shows clear evidence of a gradual submergence, although the sea does not appear to have made any significant inroads from about the second century BC until around AD 370.

This description of the Scillies fits very well with how it may have looked in the time of Pytheas of Massalia and with Strabo's description of the Cassiterides (see page 1752). It also fits the description given by Solinus and Sulpicius Severus of the Scillies as a single island. And if the final inundation occured as late as around AD 370, it could not only have given rise to the legend of Lyonesse, but also have become part of the Tristram story (see box) very early in its development.

Demonstration that the sea level has risen dramatically within historical time does not, of course, necessarily make the story of the sudden submergence of Lyonesse any less of a myth, but it does show that it may have a factual foundation. It is not difficult to imagine the depth of feeling that such a disaster would have engendered. Homes were destroyed, farmland was submerged, lives were no doubt lost. And as the memory was passed from one generation to the next, so the extent of the remembered destruction was magnified.

And perhaps that old Cornishwoman's mixture of herbs is beginning to make Lyonesse rise again in a more tangible way. In his *The geology of the Scilly Isles*, George Barrow writes:

> One point has been established in the clearest manner: the area above water in the Scilly Isles has not diminished in recent times, but has distinctly increased; and this increase is due to the constant washing up of the fine sand from the shallow sea-floor . . . .

If the Scilly Isles were once Lyonesse, then it could be said that Lyonesse is rising!

This seaweed-covered wall, uncovered at low tide on the sandflats between the islands of Samson and Tresco, suggests that the land on which it stands was once always above water

The time of your life

Are there three unvarying cycles that govern the physical, emotional and intellectual lives of every single person? And can we improve things by taking note of them? GUY LYON PLAYFAIR begins a survey of the biorhythm theory

ON 11 NOVEMBER 1960 the guest on the Long John Nebel all-night radio programme in New York was a man named George Thommen. His topic was what he defined as 'the application of mathematics to the biological scheme of things' – or what is now popularly referred to as *biorhythm*.

On that same date, one of America's best-loved screen actors, Clark Gable, was making a seemingly successful recovery from the heart attack he had suffered six days previously. The heart machine that had saved his life had been removed, and there were hopes that the popular star of *Gone with the wind* would soon be back on his feet.

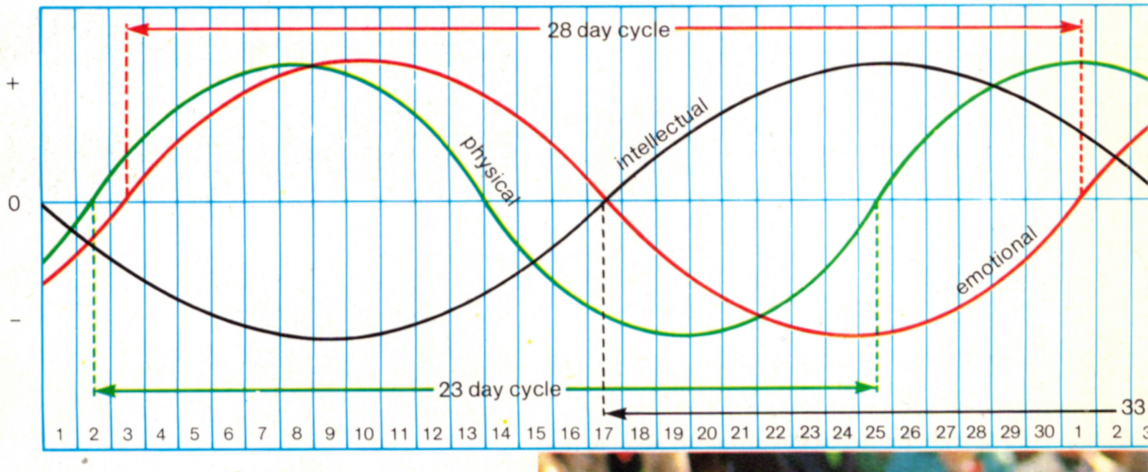
Thommen made some calculations during the programme and announced that Gable's heart attack had taken place on a 'critical' day in his biorhythm cycle. He urged the hospital to watch the patient carefully on his next critical day, which was according to him in five days' time. And on the very day that Thommen talked about, the 16th, Clark Gable suffered another heart attack. According to press reports, doctors believed he might have been saved if the heart machine had been on hand – but it was not, and the actor died. Unusual as Thommen's theories on biorhythm may have seemed – and to many, still do seem – he had apparently made a correct prediction based on them.

Biorhythm owes much to the work of Dr Hermann Swoboda (1873–1963), a psychology professor at the University of Vienna. He published the first of his six books on the subject in 1904 under the title *The periods of human life*. According to his theory, there are two such periods or cycles that regulate people's lives: one of 23 days, which governs the physical state, and the other of 28 days, which concerns the emotions. Each cycle begins at birth and recurs throughout the whole life span, and each is divided into two equal parts, one 'positive' and the other 'negative'. The first day and the day in the middle of each cycle came to be designated 'critical' days. On these days the human body or mind undergoes a change-over from positive to negative, or 'up' to 'down', or vice versa. Swoboda's conclusions were based on his own observations of cyclic fluctuations in both the physical symptoms and the emotional moods of his patients.

Biorhythms were identified and described independently, and almost simultaneously, by a Berlin physician named Wilhelm Fliess (1859–1928), who later became president of Germany's Academy of Sciences. His first book on biorhythm, *The course of life*, was published in 1906. Like Swoboda, he based his conclusions on a study of his own

Far right: Benny 'Kid' Paret lies unconscious after being knocked out in the boxing ring. The fight took place on a critical day for Paret – and he died on his next critical day

Above left: Dr Hermann Swoboda, a psychologist and one of the originators of the biorhythm theory



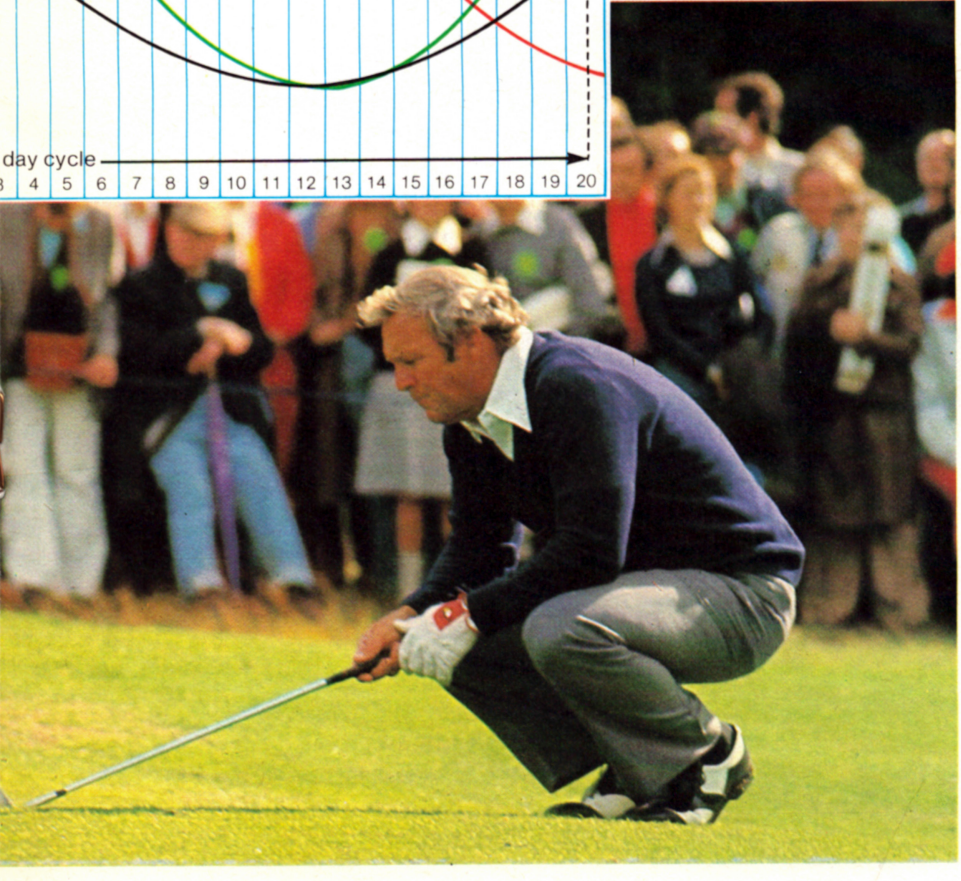
Above: this chart shows the three biorhythms, which are the 23-day physical cycle, the 28-day emotional cycle and the 33-day intellectual cycle. Critical days are indicated by the line crossing zero, showing that the cycle is switching from the low period to the high or from the high to the low

Right: Arnold Palmer in a tense moment of play. This champion golfer once lost an important tournament when all three of his biorhythms were at a low point

patients. He took the idea a stage further by associating the two cycles with his theory of the bisexual nature of humans. He identified the 23-day cycle as 'male', or physical, and the 28-day cycle as 'female', or emotional. The similarity of the latter to the average length of the menstrual cycle lent the theory a greater semblance of logic.

'All life,' Fliess wrote, 'follows an internal regulated pattern, a mechanism which is alike in man, animal and plant; one that regulates the hour of birth with the same accuracy as the hour of death.' He reasoned that, since people are the result of the development of both male and female cells, it is logical to suppose that a bisexual periodicity would continue to govern the behaviour of the organism.

Fliess cannot be accused of making unsubstantiated claims: he supported his biorhythm theories with a huge mass of statistical evidence. In fact there is so much mathematics that even his disciple George Thommen admits he overdid it – to the point of frightening off scientists as well as ordinary people. One of Fliess's earliest admirers was Sigmund Freud, who wrote no less than



184 letters to him over a 16-year period, and underwent two nose operations at his hands.

Biorhythmic theory was later added to by an Austrian engineer name Alfred Teltscher. He came up with a third cycle of 33 days, which he claimed to apply to human intellectual activity. Unfortunately, he left no published material at all. It is supposed that his work was based on a study of the performance of a group of Innsbruck students, whose ability to grasp and absorb new material seemed to show peaks and troughs within a 33-day period.

By the 1920s it appeared that a new science, based on the direct observations of three independent researchers, had come into being. Their research was confirmed by a number of German and Swiss doctors and statisticians, including Alfred Judt, Hans Schwing, Hans R. Frueh and Dr Fliess's colleague Hans Schlieper.

Reduced to their simplest terms, here are the main principles of biorhythm:

At the moment of birth, a baby undergoes a sudden and drastic change in both its environment and its internal processes. It begins to exist as an individual, deprived of its mother's life-support system with the severing of the umbilical cord. At this time, all three internal clocks are set at zero.

From now on, three separate cycles of 23,

Left: Clark Gable died on 16 November 1960 – one of his critical days. George Thommen, a biorhythm exponent, had warned of the actor's extreme danger in a radio programme five days' earlier, after calculating Gable's biorhythmic cycles

Below: astronaut Scott Carpenter rehearses part of the re-entry procedure for his planned space flight in 1962. The actual flight took place on 24 May, a critical day in Carpenter's emotional cycle – and it so happened that he overshot his target landing site on the scheduled re-entry

Bottom: Dr Wilhelm Fliess. His work on biorhythms came at about the same time as, but independent of, that of Dr Swoboda

28 and 33 days will run throughout the individual's life. Each cycle in turn consists of a half-cycle of positive activity followed by one of negative activity. The first and middle days of each full cycle are critical days.

The three cycles will restart all together at zero only after 23 × 28 × 33 days, a total of 21,252. This is 58 years and 66 or 67 days, depending on how many leap years have followed the individual's birth. However, any two of the three cycles will show simultaneous critical days quite frequently. When the midpoints are included in the calculations, it can be seen that there will be at least four double critical days in any given year, and one triple critical day in every period of just over seven and a quarter years. As for the single critical days, there will be at least five in every month and sometimes as many as eight. So we are never more than a few days away from one.

Now let us take a closer look at each cycle.

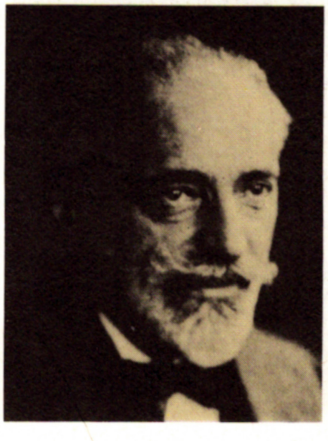
The 23-day physical cycle has two halves of $11\frac{1}{2}$ days. In the first half, we reach peak physical condition and are in tiptop shape during the fifth and sixth days, the midpoint of the half-cycle. Then, in the second half-cycle, we subside to recharge our batteries and recuperate from the exertions of the first half.

In the first half of our 28-day emotional cycle, we likewise enjoy a fortnight of optimism, creativity and good feeling. Then we have to go through 14 days of emotional subsidence and recharging. This is when we are most likely to think negatively, become annoyed easily, and have overall 'bad days'. The midpoint days in this half-cycle bring an increased probability of accidents.

The third cycle of 33 days offers us $16\frac{1}{2}$ days of lucid thinking, good memory and mental alertness, and is followed by the characteristic half-period of lower intellectual activity and output. We are advised not to take important decisions on our intellectually low or critical days because we may not be able to think properly.

The critical days are not dangerous in themselves, Thommen insists. They are merely 'switch-point days' when we change from one state to another. Biorhythm, he says, does not predict accidents. 'The way a person acts depends on what is happening *to* him, as well as on the condition he happens to be in physically, emotionally and intellectually at a particular time.' Biorhythm predicts this condition, but nothing else.

There is a certain amount of evidence that events take place as the proponents of biorhythm would expect. Celebrities other than Clark Gable who died on critical days have included Pope John XXIII, the conductor Bruno Walter, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, the poet Robert Frost, General Macarthur, Senator Estes Kefauver and the actress Marilyn Monroe. C.G. Jung died on a double critical day. The boxer Benny 'Kid'



Paret had the misfortune to enter the ring on a triple critical day. He was knocked unconscious and subsequently died – on his next critical day.

Critical days in the emotional cycle have coincided with mishaps in the lives of well-trained professionals. Astronauts Virgil Grissom and Scott Carpenter, for example, each suffered accidents on re-entry into the atmosphere on critical days. Grissom almost sank along with his capsule while Carpenter overshot his target landing site by 250 miles (400 kilometres) after coming in at the wrong angle.

For golfer Arnold Palmer, July 1962 may

Above left: the Ohmi taxi company in Japan began plotting the biorhythms of its drivers in 1968. By assigning rotas accordingly, the company claims to have reduced accidents by 30 per cent

Left: Japanese telegram messengers are warned of a coming critical day with a yellow flag placed on their motorcycles. The critical day itself is announced by a red flag – and the safe period by a green one

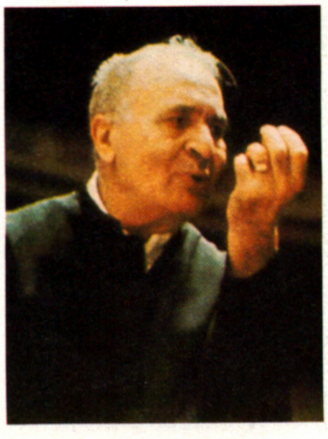
have seemed like a month when biorhythm theory was proving uncomfortably correct. He was enjoying a triple-high period when he won the British Open four strokes ahead of the runner-up. He was in good humour throughout the match, even claiming that the heat, which bothered other players, was doing him good. Yet just 10 days later, in irritable mood, he trailed into seventeenth place in the US Professional Golfers Association tournament. By then all three of his biorhythms were close to the bottom of their negative half-cycles.

These are isolated incidents of course. Yet there is also evidence in support of the biorhythm theory from surveys of large samples. For his 1939 doctoral dissertation, Hans Schwing examined 700 accidents and 300 deaths. He found that nearly 60 per cent of the former and 65 per cent of the latter fell on critical days. However, these represent no more than 20 per cent of the days in our lives when all three cycles are included, and only 15 per cent when the intellectual cycle is omitted, as it was in Schwing's survey.

In 1954 Reinhold Bochow of Humboldt University, Berlin, published the results of a survey of 497 accidents caused by agricultural machinery. His findings were remarkable: 24.75 per cent took place on triple critical days of those involved; 46.5 per cent on double critical days; and 26.6 per cent on single ones. Only 2.2 per cent took place on non-critical days. Two years later, the Hanover Sanitation Department published a report that found that 83 per cent of certain accidents were related to critical days in the biorhythmic cycle.

A Swiss surgeon, Dr F. Wehrli, has claimed a total of 10,000 successful operations after scheduling them to coincide with one of the patients' non-critical days. In contrast, though on a small sample, George Thommen found that one third of 28 patients who had undergone surgery on one of their critical days had died. The normal death rate following operations in the New York hospital he studied was much lower.

Commercial organisations that have reportedly adopted biorhythm as a means of reducing accidents among employees include America's United Airlines and Swissair. In Japan, telegram messengers find little red flags on their motorcycles to warn them to take more care on a critical day. The Ohmi taxi company of that country claims to have reduced accidents by 30 per cent since adopting a biorhythmic early warning system in 1968. Japanese insurance salesmen are even said to study the charts in order to pick the days when prospective customers' sales resistance is likely to be low.



Below: Bruno Walter, the world-famous conductor, is another celebrity who died on a critical day in his biorhythmic cycle

Does the study of biorhythm offer us all a chance to improve our daily life merely by becoming aware of the natural ups and downs in our physical, emotional and intellectual states? This may be so. But there is reason to believe that the natural rhythms of life, which unquestionably do exist, do not conform to those marked out by Swoboda, Fliess, Teltscher and their many followers.

On page 1826: what is right and what is wrong with the biorhythm theory

EXTRA! BUFFALO EVENING NEWS. EXTRA!

VOL. XLII—NO. 132. BUFFALO, N. Y., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1901. PRICE ONE CENT.

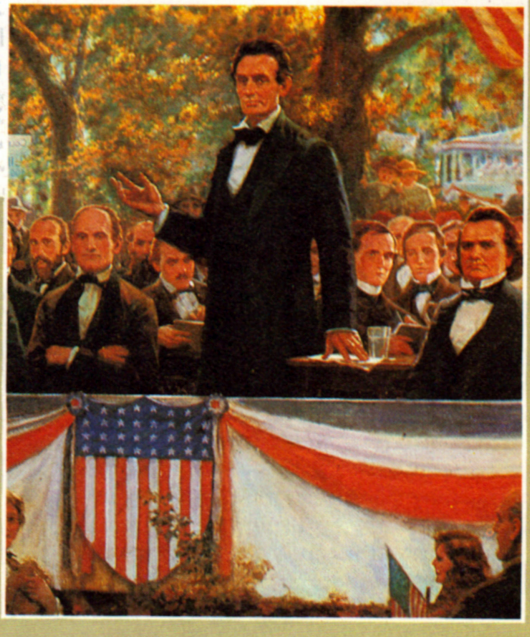
EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

PRESIDENT DEAD!

William McKinley Passed Away at the Milburn Home From Effects of Cowardly Assassin's Bullet.

No hiding place

Bad luck appears to attach itself to some people with a single-mindedness that seems to imply an organising intelligence. PAUL SIEVEKING describes the appalling progress of some of the world's worst jinxes



Below: the death of 21-year old Tara Browne – heir to the Guinness family fortune – in 1966 was only one tragedy in the long history of the family jinx. Fatal crashes and inexplicable suicides, death plunges and drug accidents have bedevilled the Guinness family

WHILE A CURSE is a conscious invocation of misfortune against others, a jinx is merely a bringer of bad luck – why it starts is anybody's guess. Jinxes may be curses in disguise, unknown to the victims. It could even be that someone who suffers a series of inexplicable misfortunes comes to believe himself to be jinxed – and so unconsciously brings about further disasters.

For 400 years the Haanappel family of Doesburg in Holland have had the palms of their hands turn black six months after they are born. Doctors say this is the result of a gene mutation, but local folklore maintains that a Haanappel saved a church from fire by ringing the bells, burning his hands as he slid down the bell rope. The Devil, in his anger, cursed him and his heirs forever.

No one has come up with an explanation for the misfortunes of the Guinness brewery family. In 1978 they suffered four deaths in as many months: in May Lady Henrietta Guinness plunged to her death from an aqueduct in Spoleto, Italy; in June another Guinness heiress drowned in a bath while trying to inject herself with heroin. Also in June, Major Dennys Guinness was found dead in Hampshire with an empty pill bottle by his side. In August, John Guinness, then an aide to British Prime Minister James Callaghan, survived a head-on collision in Norfolk, but his four-year-old son was killed and another son seriously injured. Lady Henrietta's cousin, Tara Browne, had died in a car crash in Chelsea in 1966.

Jinxes can perform to the most exacting timetables. The Milli family, from a lonely mountain village in central Italy, seem to

have such a jinx. On 17 January 1949 a woman in the family died, as happened on the same day in 1959 and 1969. On 17 January 1978, misfortune struck a year early when Giuseppina Milli, aged 72, died of a heart attack. On 17 January 1989 the remaining family members plan to stay in hospital, taking no chances.

Black Tuesday

This patterning effect sometimes emerges around specific days of the week as well. The Marquis of Chaumont hated Tuesday so much that he had the word cut out of all his books and papers. He was ill every Tuesday for 79 years and died on a Tuesday in 1780.

One famous periodical jinx hangs over the American presidency. Since 1840 no president elected in a year ending with a zero has survived his term of office. Pneumonia took off William H. Harrison (elected in 1840). Lincoln (1860), Garfield (1880), McKinley (whose second term began in 1900) and Kennedy (1960) were all assassinated while still in office. Harding (1920) had a heart attack; Roosevelt (1940) died of polio. And there has already been one assassination attempt on Reagan (1980).

There is a jinxed aria in Halévy's opera *Charles VI*, which was premiered at the Opéra Comique in Paris in 1852. As the celebrated tenor Maffiani sang 'Oh God, smash him', meaning the traitorous villain, he lifted his eyes to the ceiling. One of the stage hands immediately toppled to his death from a perch aloft. Maffiani was inconsolable, and the following morning the newspapers were calling it the 'Curse Aria'. On the next night when he sang it he fixed his eyes on an empty box. Suddenly, the curtains of the box parted and a man taking his seat swayed and toppled to his death. On the third night the tenor sang the aria staring at the floor, but a musician in the orchestra pit played off-key. Maffiani glared at him and he died of a heart attack.

Further performances were cancelled, but in 1858 Napoleon III asked Halévy to stage *Charles VI* for him. On the night before the performance Napoleon and Eugénie narrowly escaped bombs hurled by Italian revolutionaries. The opera was cancelled and has never been staged since.

Various stretches of railway and road appear to have jinxes on them. The railway line between Acklington and Belford in Northumberland, a distance of 21 miles (34 kilometres), has been dubbed the 'hoodoo line'. Passengers just fall out of 'secure' doors on London to Edinburgh expresses. Two lives were lost within 18 days in August 1980, exactly a year after an identical death fall. A young sailor had also died on the same stretch in 1978. British Rail remain mystified.

A 100-yard (90-metre) section of the M4 motorway between Swindon and Chippenham in Wiltshire claimed four lives within a week in the spring of 1979. Traffic experts could find no obvious cause. Equally baffling were a string of fatal 'carbon-copy' accidents at night on a stretch of the Sevenoaks bypass between Gracious Lane Bridge and Chipstead flyover in Kent. In each case the driver swerved inexplicably across the grass verge separating the two carriageways.

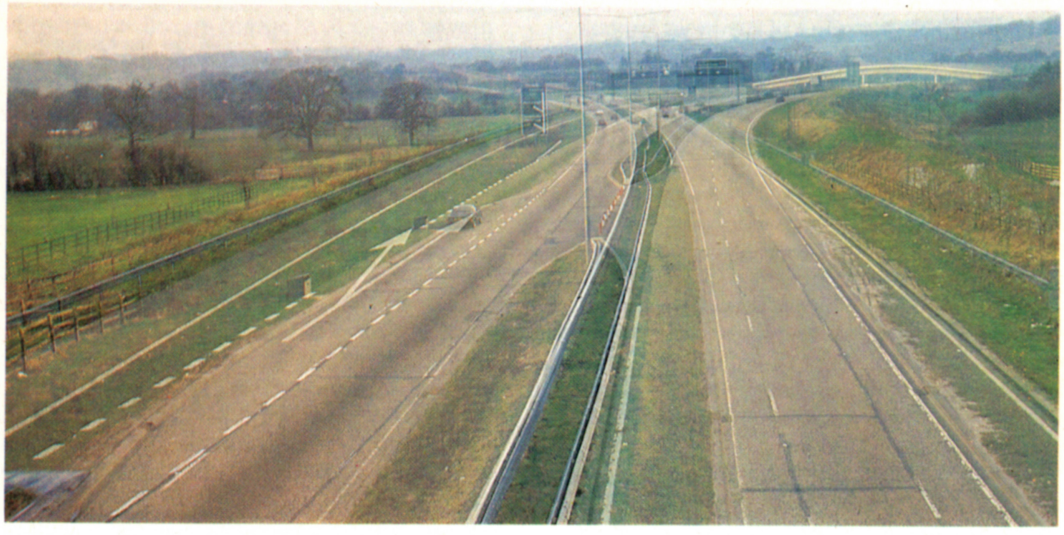
In the first crash in November 1977, three people lost their lives. Then in May 1978 three young men died 100 yards (90 metres away. In the following August another young man in a car swerved to his death, and in February 1979 a mother and her son heading for Tonbridge were killed when another car left the northbound carriageway and hit them head-on.

One of the most famous periodical jinxes hangs over American presidents who are elected in years ending with a zero. Abraham Lincoln (left, centre), who came to office in 1860, McKinley (left), who was elected in 1900 for the second time, Roosevelt (bottom centre), whose third term as president began in 1940, and John F. Kennedy (below), who was elected in 1960, all died during their terms of office. And there has already been one attempt on the life of Ronald Reagan (bottom), who was elected in 1980

Road to dusty death

A possible clue lies in the unnerving experience of Mrs Babs Davidson, an employee of British Telecom. She was driving home in winter moonlight along the jinxed road around the time of the last-mentioned crash. She knew the road well, but suddenly the way ahead was no longer familiar. Part of it was blacked out and a road she had never seen before forked mistily away to her right. 'I felt a tremendous compulsion to take it,' she recalled, 'but forced myself to go on. I was very relieved when I found I had done the right thing and was still heading north on the carriageway.' The appearance of a ghost road could easily be dismissed as an hallucination due to fatigue, but Mrs Davidson claims to have seen it on two subsequent occasions, although she is unable to identify the spot exactly. And usually her claims have been taken seriously by Department of Transport investigators looking for the cause of the crashes.

Many jinxes seem to be analogous to an outbreak of disease that infects a few victims and then peters out. Behavioural syndromes



Left: the jinxed stretch of the Sevenoaks bypass in Kent, between Gracious Lane Bridge and Chipstead flyover, where several fatal 'carbon copy' accidents took place in the late 1970s. One driver who avoided disaster was Mrs Babs Davidson who, on three occasions, claims to have seen a 'ghost' road branching off the main carriageway. She felt an overwhelming urge to follow it, but managed to continue on her route. Had the other drivers succumbed and taken the ghost road – to their deaths?

such as mass faintings and the spread of rumours and panic also seem to fit this pattern (see page 670).

Films about the occult often seem to engender such an outbreak, their productions plagued with accidents, illness and death. *The omen I* was typical. Star Gregory Peck's aeroplane was struck by lightning, as was one carrying author David Seltzer and Robert Munger, who devised the film. Director Richard Donner had a rough flight too and was later hit by a car. Lightning struck the building next to his Rome hotel. Special effects man John Richardson was in a car accident with a lorry in Holland, and his passenger was killed. When he regained consciousness, he saw a milestone for the town of Ommen. A pack of dogs ran amok and injured two stuntmen, and a zoo keeper was killed by a tiger the day the film crew left the zoo.

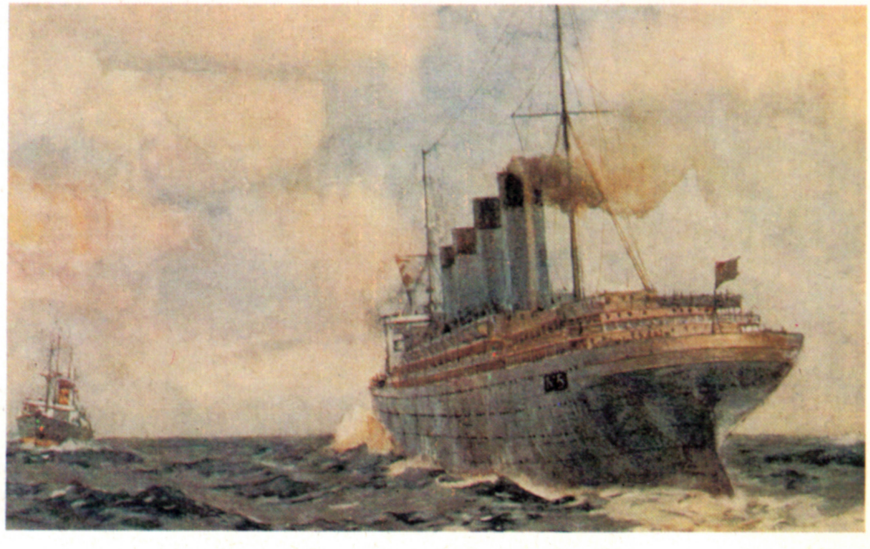
Casualties of curses?

We all know, or have read about, accident-prone people. Whether they suffer from some elusive behavioural 'infection' or had a curse put on them at an early age by some ill-disposed person, it is impossible to say. Perhaps someone (or something) 'up there' (or wherever) is trying to get a message through to the hapless victims.

Brian Challender, a bricklayer from Bournemouth, Dorset, was born on a Friday the 13th, which he believes accounts for his run of misfortune. As a boy he had a bad bicycle accident, was knocked out by a golf club and attacked by a man with an axe. He was stabbed at a fairground, pinned down by a 55-tonne motorway earth mover, trapped under a garage door, stunned by falling metal on a building site (he had removed his hard hat in the heat to cool down), scarred for life by steam and rammed by a rowing boat off Bournemouth pier. His last recorded disaster was when he was bending down to pick up a pin for good luck – he was knocked unconscious by a falling brick.

Besides the accident-prone, there are the 'Jonahs', those people who always seem to be around to witness the misfortune of others. A certain Mrs Murray was a passenger on the final journeys of three doomed ships: the *Titanic*, the *Lusitania* and the *Celtic*, which was rammed by the *Anaconda* in 1927. It happens on land too. Dr Max Benis, a specialist in allergies, has been on hand at least 19 times to help people in distress. Wherever he goes people touch live wires, choke on their food, begin to drown or fall off high rocks. Said the *Daily Mail* of 6 December 1977, 'not many of the victims seem particularly grateful to Dr Max.'

Also within this category are people who seem to trigger illness in others in some unfathomable way. The classic example is 'Typhoid Mary', a cook in New York in 1906. Several people contracted typhoid and she was detained in hospital for three years, even though she was not suffering from typhoid herself. After her release she returned to work as a cook under various aliases. About five years later, 25 people in the Sloane Maternity Hospital, New York, went down with the disease and two died. Mary was cooking at the hospital and was detained again.



Below: the *Lusitania*, which sank in 1915. A certain Mrs Murray survived not only the wreck of this ship but also that of the *Titanic*, in 1912, and that of the *Celtic*, in 1927. Jinx, curse – or some kind of *good* luck?

Left: the popular view of the 'crimes' of the Frenchwoman Jeanne Weber, known as 'the Ogress'. Accused of murdering several children in the early 1900s, she was finally acquitted – for it seemed that she was one of those unfortunate people whose mere presence causes the sudden, inexplicable death of others

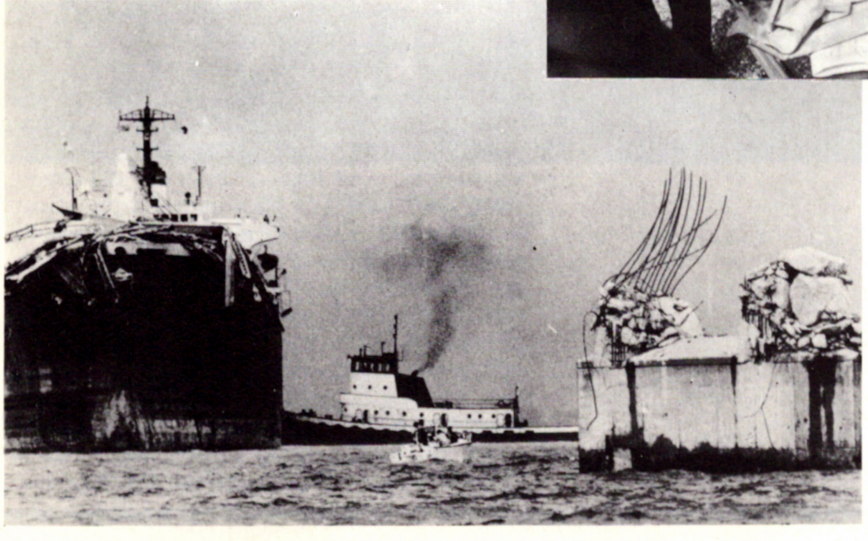
The case of Jeanne Weber, known throughout France as 'the Ogress', is featured in this author's book *Man bites man* (1981). In 1906 she was accused of murdering two of her children and two of her nephews. The children had died after being alone with her, but the deaths were proved to be natural and she was acquitted. The following year she was staying in the house of a woodcutter when a small child died of convulsions while sitting on her knee. After two further trials she was acquitted.

More recently, four children died and three narrowly escaped death while being watched over by an 18-year-old epileptic, Christine Fallings of Blountstown, Florida, USA. In February 1980, the first died of encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. A few days later, another nearly died of meningitis. In February 1981, after Christine had moved to Lakeland, Florida, two young brothers in her care went into convulsions, but recovered after emergency treatment. A few days later, on 23 February, Christine was looking after another boy when he died of myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle. Three days later, the same disease killed another of her charges. Finally, on 14 July 1981, a little girl died in her arms after being inoculated against diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus. Extensive medical tests showed that Christine was not carrying any communicable diseases. She told the Florida newspaper *Sentinel Star*: 'Sometimes I wonder if I don't have some kind of spell over me when I get around young'uns.'

Another category of jinxed folk are those who constantly emerge unscathed from accidents. The life story of Wesley MacIntire illustrates this rather well. On 9 May 1980 a freighter rammed the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Florida, USA. Thirty-five people were killed, and the sole survivor was MacIntire, who swam to the surface when his pick-up truck plunged into the river.

During the Second World War when he was in the navy he had dived off the side of his ship seconds before it was bombed. Later, as a lorry driver, he drove a 20-tonne load of gravel $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles (2.5 kilometres) down a mountainside after his brakes failed, and managed to spin the lorry round and round in a parking lot until it stopped. In 1959 he crashed a container lorry loaded with explosive gases. It did not explode. Then an air tank in another lorry he was driving did explode, but MacIntire was saved by his mattress. There were many other accidents that he managed to survive. 'The only thing I can think of,' he said, 'is that the Good Lord must really be saving me up for something. I hope it's not another accident.'

Below: Wesley MacIntire is carried from the wreck of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Florida, USA, which was rammed by a freighter in May 1980 (bottom). He was the sole survivor of this disaster and has emerged unscathed from many others. He devoutly hopes that his life is not being preserved by Providence just for one final accident



Crazy night in Maine

THE EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES of Dr Herbert Hopkins, an American medical practitioner living in the state of Maine, were described by Hilary Evans in 'Agents of the dark' (page 526). While the doctor was investigating a UFO case, he was allegedly visited by a weird 'man in black'. Subsequently his son and daughter-in-law were visited by a bizarre couple.

The case that was being investigated by Dr Hopkins at the time, and which brought about his involvement with the man in black, was also bizarre. Two young men had watched UFOs manoeuvring for several hours one night. And while they watched, they experienced strange distortions of reality. By the use of hypnosis Dr Hopkins elicited from one of the witnesses apparent memories of being taken aboard an alien spacecraft and

An American doctor was threatened by a 'man in black' when he investigated a UFO report. CHARLES BOWEN describes the case that started it all

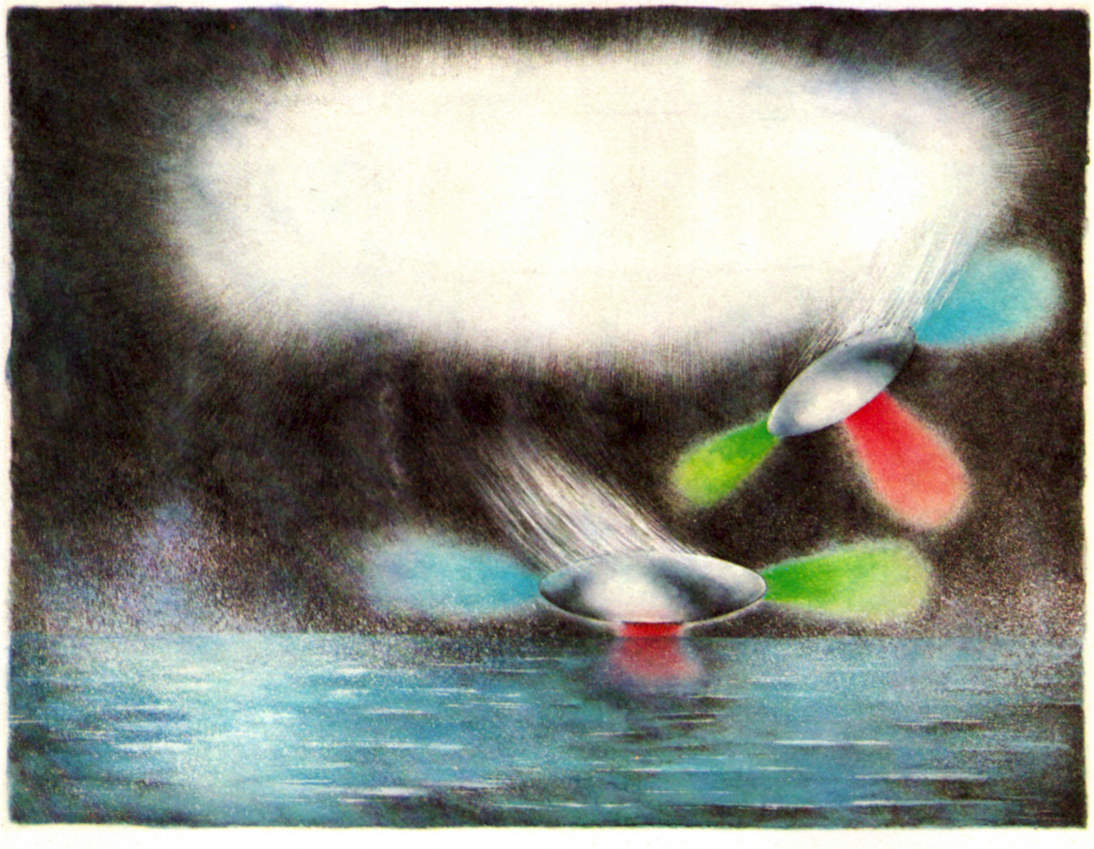
subjected to a medical examination of the kind that is common to so many reports of UFO contacts.

The paranormal phenomena in the case were similar to those reported in other UFO sightings. The witnesses experienced obscure promptings that seemed to guide them to the encounter. They thought that nearby farm animals – cows, ducks and geese – were also involved in the strange events. The psychic aspects of the case were pursued by another investigator, Dr Berthold Schwarz, without success.

The witnesses were terrified after their experience – to the point that they mistook stars and planets in the night sky for UFOs. The two men were sincere – and the ufologists could find no explanation for the events of this crazy night.

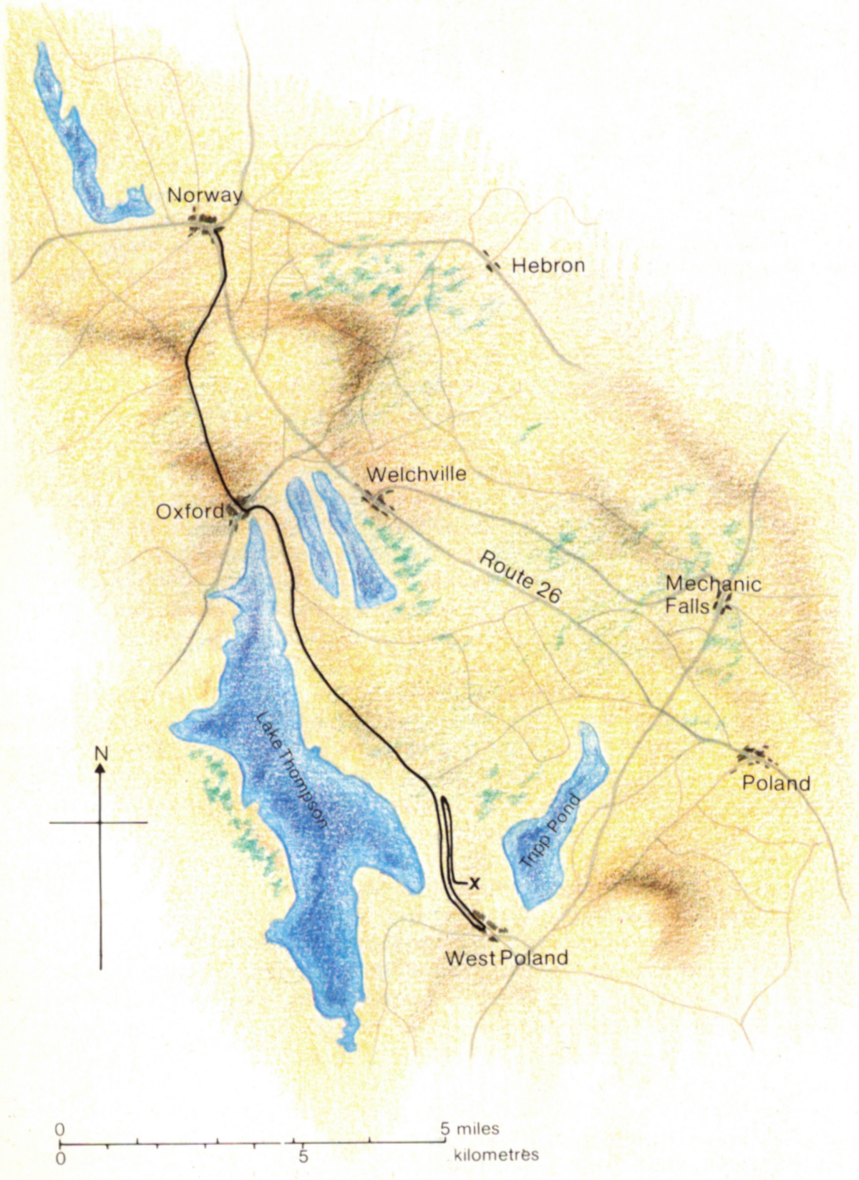
'Strange cubes and spheres'

Close encounter of the third kind: Tripp Pond, Maine, USA, 27 October 1975



In October 1975 David Stephens, aged 21, and a friend aged 18 were sharing a trailer home in Norway, Maine, in the eastern United States. Subsequently the two young men requested anonymity, but Stephens's name was revealed by an American UFO magazine. His friend's name was not revealed, so he will be referred to here as 'Paul'. They had known each other only a few weeks and had been struck by the fact that similar paranormal experiences had occurred to both of them.

Both David and Paul were working late shifts – David at a poultry processing plant, Paul at a wool mill – which is why they were both awake in the early hours of 27 October. They were listening to music at about 3 a.m. when they heard what sounded like an explosion outside. They rushed outside, but saw nothing unusual. While they were standing there David suggested it would be a good night for a drive. Paul recommended a run



The wanderings of David Stephens and 'Paul' during the night of their UFO encounter. 'X' marks the point where they watched UFO 'aerobatics' over Tripp Pond

down to nearby Lake Thompson. So they began driving southwards down Route 26. Their intention was to stay on that road until they were about 2 miles (3 kilometres) east of the town of Oxford. Then they would cut across to Oxford and go south alongside the lake.

However, things did not work out like that. According to their subsequent statements the car made a right turn onto a back road, against their will and with Paul gripping the steering wheel firmly. The road was a more direct route to Oxford, and was about 5 miles (8 kilometres) long. The ride was unusually smooth and they covered the distance very quickly, taking only about two minutes – implying a speed of about 150 miles per hour (240 km/h).

After passing through Oxford they continued down the eastern side of Lake Thompson. They noticed that cows in a field they passed were shaking their heads from side to side. Just after that they saw two beams of white light shining from a cornfield onto the road. Expecting to see a truck emerging, Paul slowed down. They were surprised to see the source of light rising from the ground. Coming to a halt, Paul switched off the car engine and they wound down the windows, expecting to see a helicopter. There was no sound. They saw a cylindrical shape rising behind the trees that fringed the field. It was surrounded by multicoloured lights that went out as the object lifted above the trees.

Alarmed, the two men restarted the car and accelerated away, while closing the windows and locking the doors. They drove southwards. Then they became aware of a beam of extremely bright light. They had no conscious recollection of what happened next, until they found themselves in the car, parked on a dirt road leading off from the tarred road on which they had been travelling, and close to the cornfield of the original sighting. The car windows were partly opened and the doors were unlocked.

They now made an alarming discovery: David saw that Paul's eyes were 'all just orange' while Paul saw that David's were orange except for the dark area of the pupils.

Encounter on impulse

The UFO was still visible in the sky. They decided to drive on towards the town of West Poland. There they turned round and headed back along the same road. When they had gone about 2 miles (3 kilometres) the UFO was no longer visible. They turned back yet again, so that they were now travelling south. On an unexplained impulse, Paul again turned off the intended route, onto a gravel road leading down to Tripp Pond. As they completed the turn-off they saw the cylindrical object at an elevation of about 30° from the horizontal and at an estimated distance of 150 to 200 yards (135 to 180 metres). The car engine died and could not be restarted. The radio fell silent. Then the object moved 'in an up-and-down fashion' and took up a position at about 80° of elevation in the south-east, at an estimated distance of 500 yards (450 metres).

When David and Paul had been sitting in the immobile car for some 45 minutes two disc-shaped objects appeared. They carried red, green and blue lights and each was about a quarter of the size of the cylindrical craft. The discs put on an 'aerobatic display', descending with a rocking motion, like falling leaves, skimming the surface of Tripp Pond and rising swiftly 'as though climbing a staircase'.

While all this was going on the witnesses had the feeling that the pond, which in reality was half a mile (800 metres) distant, was only 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 metres) away and was immense, like an ocean. It seemed to them

that there was an island over which the 'aerobatics' were taking place. In fact, Tripp Pond has no such island.

Suddenly fog formed above the water. It approached and enveloped the car, but the cylinder was still visible. Meanwhile the radio burst into life – with a weather forecast, telling them that a bright and sunny day was in store.

At 6.30 a.m. Paul switched on the ignition and tried again to start the car. This time it started and by 7 a.m. they had arrived at the home of David's family in Oxford.

The dreamlike quality of the experience and the ominous significance that seemed to invest every small incident are brought out in some remarks made by David:

> What was weird was when the big one went straight up, the clouds seemed to follow it. It just took off, and all this time not a car went by. We didn't see a person, or an animal, or a bird . . . nothing! And when the cloud disappeared two ducks went by and then two geese went by and then two ducks again went by. They were going in twos and we noticed the cows were getting up in twos.

Surprisingly, the pair made a return journey to Tripp Pond at 4 p.m. on 28 October, when what seemed like snowflakes fell around them and strange cubes and spheres 'whizzed in all directions'.

Threats from a stranger

The following morning David Stephens was alone in the trailer when he was disturbed by a loud knocking on the door. When he opened it he found himself face to face with a stockily built man who sported a crew-cut hairstyle, sunglasses and dark blue clothing. He asked David if he was the one who had seen a 'flying saucer'. When David said yes, the stranger said: 'Better keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you.' He then 'scurried' away around an adjacent building, and no more was seen of him.

The Stephens family reported the UFO encounter to the Androscoggin County Sheriff and then to the *Lewiston Daily Sun*. After making initial enquiries, a UFO investigator, Shirley Fickett, taped interviews with the witnesses on 11 November. She was interested in the time that was 'lost' after the intense beam of light had struck the car and rendered its occupants unconscious. She wanted to have the witnesses questioned under hypnosis and learned that Dr Herbert Hopkins sometimes used hypnosis in the treatment of his patients. In a spirit of 'scientific adventure' he offered his services free of charge.

David Stephens was the first to be questioned. His parents, Mrs Fickett and Paul were present. Thereafter Paul refused to attend the sessions and withdrew completely from the investigations. Eight hypnotic sessions were conducted from December 1975 to March 1976.

When under hypnosis David described standing outside the car after the light beam had struck it: he was standing on a 'floor suspended above', watching through a window as the car slid sideways, with Paul still in it. He was in a room with curved walls. At first he was alone, but he was joined after a while by a non-human being. The creature had hands and feet, with three webbed fingers and a thumb on each hand. The head was mushroom-shaped, its large, white eyes were slanted, its nose was small, and no mouth was visible. The creature wore a flowing black sheet-like garment. It communicated by 'brain waves' with David, whose name it knew.

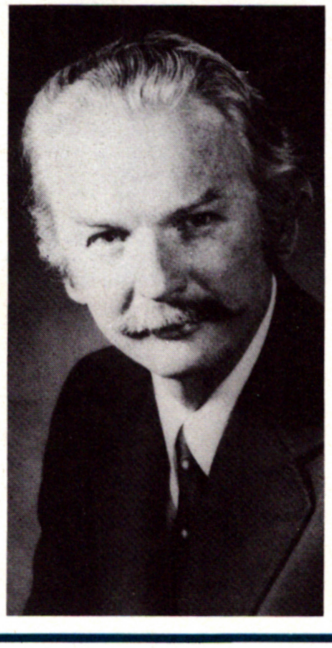
David was then taken into another room where there were four similar beings. It was like a 'hospital room with an operating table'. Blood – enough to fill two syringes – was taken from near his right elbow. When the beings tried to persuade him to lie on the table for a medical examination, David became violent and struck one of the beings. They did not retaliate, and eventually he relented. He was divested of his clothes and thoroughly examined, from head to toe, with a box-like device. The creatures seemed to want to be friendly. When David was at last returned to the car, Paul was unaware that he had been away.

In the final hypnotic session David seemed to suffer great emotional conflict when he was questioned about a statement, made by the beings, that they would return. He could not, or would not, disclose anything on this point and the questioning was discontinued because of his distress.

When Dr Berthold Schwarz conducted his psychiatric-parapsychological investigation he concluded that there had been no previous interest on David Stephens's part in flying saucers, or detailed knowledge of such classic cases as the Betty and Barney Hill abduction (see page 1507). He also concluded that David was still frightened and puzzled by the events, that there were no contradictions in his story and that there was no history or evidence of dishonesty, falsification, or loss of memory before these events.

Concerning the medical examination, Dr Schwarz stated that it seemed so absurd technically that 'one wonders if this wasn't staged by the UFO forces in order to create a particular impression'. He noted, in connection with the orange colour that the witnesses' eyes took on at one point, that an ophthalmologist colleague had said that when he used fluorescein in his work, the eyes became transiently orange.

The entities told David Stephens that they would return. Did they do so, in the guise of the weird 1930s-style characters who attempted to scare off Herbert Hopkins, the investigator who learned too much?



Dr Berthold Schwarz, who studied the contact witness David Stephens and his relationships with his family and the UFO investigators. Schwarz found Stephens to have much in common with other contactees and with gifted psychics – energy, individualism and pent-up tension

Post script

Your letters to THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,
I was most interested in your article 'Trespassers will be . . .' in issue 76. I knew Chanctonbury Ring very well in the 1920s and 1930s. Whenever I could manage to spare the time I would visit Chanctonbury Ring on the night of the midsummer full Moon. I have not been able to visit the ring since 1939, so there may be many changes now.

There was an excellent dew pond in very good condition about 20 to 25 yards [18 to 23 metres] west of the ring. I would time my arrival for between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. and stay until 1 a.m. There was a low bank of earth around the ring and I would sit on it, quietly facing the dew pond, and listen to the total silence – yet hear the sounds of a distant past. I experienced a feeling of absolute peace and contentment and sensed that I was welcomed by those who had lived there long ago. I felt that they were my friends, who were now going about their business all around me. It was with sadness that I left the ring and returned to the present, refreshed in mind. On none of these midsummer visits did I ever meet anyone at the ring.

At one full Moon – I think it would be about September 1938 – I took a friend (a lady) there, but about 200 yards [180 metres] from the ring my friend became distressed: so much so that we had to turn back without reaching it. Yet I could feel the serene peace that I knew so well.

I have heard – I forget where or when – that in the 1950s the ring became a centre for black magic and obscene rituals, organised from Brighton. If this is true, it may have created the conditions described in your article. However, to me Chanctonbury Ring is a wonderful and happy memory, and I thank Toyne Newton for reminding me of 'a strange and different world'.
Yours faithfully,
B. W. Wade London

Dear Sir,
I have noticed the lack of letters on the subject of twins, about which you published a series of articles in issues 57 to 59. I have also noticed your failure to produce any evidence on the subject of what one twin feels when the other one is dead. My own twin died when I was only six months old, though I did not know of this until a few years ago. But even in childhood significant events began to happen. When I was short of cash, or had a problem to which I could find no answer, my needs would suddenly be met out of the blue. My problems would be solved, or money, often in just the amount that I needed, would come to me: I would find it as I was walking down the street, or it would appear in some other obscure place. I also quite frequently have the feeling of being watched over or looked after; it can be comforting, yet sometimes it is frightening. (I do believe in life after death.)

I wonder if such occurrences are common when one twin is left behind after the death of the other. Has anyone else who has lost a twin had the same bewildering experiences that I have had?
Yours faithfully,
Keith John Martin Newcastle-upon-Tyne

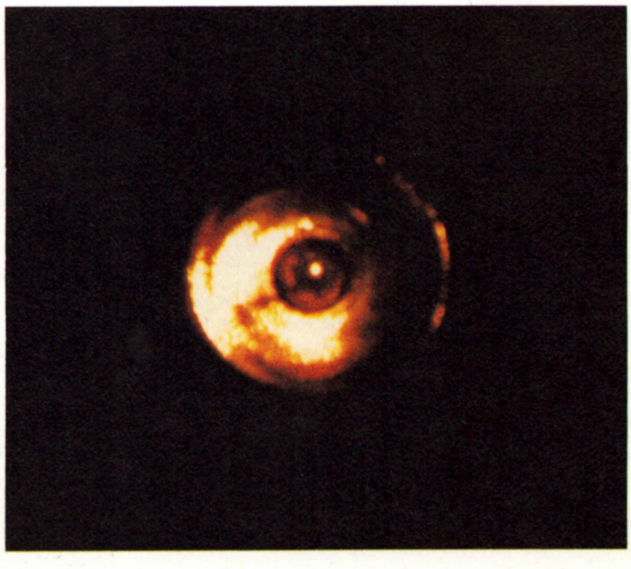
Dear Sir,
I should like to tell you about what I think may have been a premonition – a dream that seemed real, yet confused.

I saw a group of aeroplanes flying in the night sky. They vanished and one large passenger plane remained. I gazed at it for a while. The surroundings were very unfamiliar to me. I seemed to be standing in an empty garage; with me was a cat, which kept walking around my legs. In front of me was a river and across the river was a large town or city. At one end of the river was a bridge. I continued to gaze at the plane – it seemed to be coming closer. The plane began to dive towards the water and eventually towards the bridge. Then there was a loud noise, a flash of light, and screams. The cat ran away, only to return with a few more, and then they headed towards the bridge. At this moment I awoke.

What I saw could have been the plane crash in Washington [of 13 January 1982] in which an airliner crashed into a bridge and then into the river. The planes that I saw could have meant that I was close to an airport. (The plane that crashed in reality had just taken off.) The garage could have been related to the cars that crowded the bridge. What I cannot explain is the presence of the cats.
Yours faithfully,
John Pickup Preston

Premonitions and dreams often contain apparently irrelevant material – but the main features of your dream could well have been a 'signal' of the imminent air disaster in Washington.

Dear Sir,
Enclosed is a photograph of what I think is a UFO. It moved around in circles and set off very fast (north-west).
Yours faithfully,
David Rudkin (aged 13) Liverpool



Thank you for your picture, which arrived on 1 April. Extraordinary, isn't it, that UFOs these days bear such a striking resemblance to cycle lamps?

Send *your* letters to THE UNEXPLAINED, Orbis House, 20–22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES – 36
Superstition Mountains, Arizona, USA